# INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA RELATIONS ; AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF POWER DIPLOMACY

# A SYNOPSIS

**Submitted to**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

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## (1) INTRODUCTION :-

"Who Rules east Europe commands the Heart land.

Who rules Heartland commands world Island

Who rules the world Island commands the world"

- (Mackinder ; 1919)

In 1919, in his book "Democratic Ideals and Reality" he gave heartland theory. He described central Asian region as the heartland to postulate the importance of the Central Asia viz Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan.

India's linkages with Central Asia date back millennia to at least the third century BCE. The two were connected through the silk road, which not only served as a medium for the transportation of goods but also facilitated the dispersion of ideas, Philosophy, religion and thought. Thus, India has had strong traditional bonds with the central Asian region that have been renewed in the post-Soviet years. The region is rich in natural resources which can be utilized for Indian energy requirements. The G.D.P. growth rate of India is 7.8%, to sustain this growth rate India will need a vast amount of energy of *Central Asian Region (CAR)* as an effective alternative to the Gulf Region.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Central Asian States in 1991 have increased the geostrategic significance of the region, which attract the major powers such as USA, Russia, China, India and other regional powers to begin the new great games. As India Lost the visibility and presence in the region with shifts in the regional balance of power, it has become imperative for it to increase its strategic foot hold in the region.

The present-day geopolitical condition coupled with the stakes that India has in the region makes it necessary for the Policymakers to take immediate steps that enhance the strategic position of India. Due to changed geopolitical architecture of Asia, India needs to strengthen its position in CARs.

**(2) PROBLEM STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: -** The concerned work seeks to address the following questions:-

1. What are basic areas of interest towards the central Asian region ?
2. How far is it true that Central Asian Countries are interested in promoting strong economic and strategic ties with India?
3. What has been the role of external players (Russia, U.S., China) in the CAR?

4. How India manages to develop the relation with Central Asian Countries?

## (3) LITERATURE REVIEW:-

The Following literature have been reviewed for the purpose of research study :-

### 3.1 *Geopolitics of Central Asia*

Nirmala Joshi (2011) in *"Reconnecting India and central Asia, emerging security and economic dimensions"* deals with multi-dimensional aspects of Indi's central Asia relations that include regional economic linkages and nontraditional security treatments before India and central Asia. This article highlights areas of cooperation in the field of information technology, infrastructure trade, education, health, and technology through which New Delhi aims to reconnect Central Asian states.

The article titled *"Dynamics of India and central Asia relations, energy as a strategic factor"* by Ramakrushna Pradhan highlighted the importance of the energy factor and reconceptualize the changing dynamics of India. Central Asia relations from the viewpoint of India's energy security also give suggestions regarding India's policy option to ensure energy security in central asia. It also gives suggestions on India's policy options to ensure energy in central Asia.

Muhammad Umar Abbas in his article (2013) titled *"Geopolitics of energy in central Asia new players on the old chessboard"* explains of this article was the energy beauty of central Asian countries draw attention to all external countries. A geopolitical rivalry has been started by the east led by USSR and the west led by the USA pipelines play a major role. India and Pakistan support the southern directed pipelines. TAPI and IPI are being subjected to the geopolitically rivalry of the region. The existing realities predict militarization of the water resource along with the central Asian regions.

### 3.2 *India's Geopolitical and Geo-Economic Interest in the Region.*

Prof Gulshan Sachdeva in his article *"India's attitudes towards China's growing influence in Central Asia"* explains that Chine's explains in Central Asia is watched very carefully in India. China is going to provide competition to India in both energy and trade. The new US thinking of linking south and Central Asia with possibilities of a wider new grouping could fit into Indian thinking. The policymakers in India do not believe in the policy of exporting democracy, they would be very sympathetic to political changes as they know that Indian interests would be served better by opening the region to further democratic changes and more economic reforms.

Raj Kumar Kothari**.** In his research Journal *"India's strategic interest in central Asia"* analysis that central Asia in the post-soviet era has emerged as a region of geo-economic, geopolitical, and geo-strategic significance. The region is endowed with an abundance of natural mineral resources like hydrocarbon and uranium ore deposits and has vast hydropower potential as well as of which have drawn the attention of the great powers. In this backdrop, India too has been looking increasingly towards central Asia as a reliable source of oil and natural gas and for furthering its strategic goals. New Delhi's major interest include energy security, infrastructure development, the against Islamic fundamentalism and trade and investment.

Marlene Lanelle & Sebastien peyrouse in their book "Mapping central Asia : Indian perception and strategies (2011), analyze the renewed American involvement in Afghanistan Pakistan's growing fragility, and China's rise in the powers in the post-soviet space, central Asian – South Asia relation have become central to understanding the future of the Eurasian continent. Mapping Central Asia identifies the trends, attitude, and ideas that are key to structuring the central Asia- South Asia axis in the coming decades.

Vinod Anand in his book *"Perspective on Transforming central Asia Engagement: prospects and issues (2011)"* analyze that Central Asia has been considered as part of India's strategic neighborhood. However, India's engagement with central Asia has been weak due to many contextual reasons. Earlier when the nascent central Asian nation acquire their independent status after the demise of the Soviet Union, India was preoccupied with its own economic problems. This volume looks at the strategic environment in Central Asia, the evolving security situations in Afghanistan that is of concern to Central Asian states as well as India.

### 3.3 *Great power game in Central Asia.*

Stephen Blank (2012) in *"Whether the new great game in Central in Central Asia?"* present a great game or a new great game in Central Asia among the major external and internal political actors. The states like Russia and China purpose great power aggrandizement and even neo-imperial policies and on the other hand Central Asian states attach them to these countries 'hope of obtaining resources from them. Moscow is pursuing military bases to intervene in the domestic affairs of members of the CSTO and China is strengthening its commercial primacy in the area. Thus, the international competition within and around Central Asia is likely to intensify.

Nasir Raza Khan in his book *"India, Central Asia and the world powers"* (2013) puts into perspective the dynamics of India's relation with central Asia, and assess the role of the

major powers in the region. The recent years have witnessed a fundamental change in the international context. This change has been brought about by the forces of globalization, disintegration of Soviet Union and the emergence of the US as a pre-eminent power.

Nistha Kaushiki in his journals *"The new great game and India's connect Central Asia Policy; strategic perspective and challenges (2013)"* analyze the objective of the major powers in the CAR while establishing linkages between the key development in the Asian region such as emerging sino-Russo strategic alliance, Obama's Asia Pivot, Dushanbe summit, etc. It discusses its implications in the form of challenges for India. Finally, it attempts to recommend a multifaceted approached for India to strengthen its position in the CAR.

Ramakrushna Pradhan in his book *"Geopolitics of Energy in Central Asia 2020"* focuses on the geopolitics of Central Asia which has emerged as the new fertile ground for oil and energy resources. It analyses the scramble for energy and control over the region by many nations and their diplomatic maneuverings to ensure energy sufficiency and economic growth. It looks aggressive foreign policies by countries like the U.S., China, the European Union, focusing primarily on India's position and strategies in the region, within the new great game. The book further examines the dynamics between central India and India's for geopolitical engagement and diversification of energy sources.

### 3.4 *India's policies and strategies*

Raj Kumar Kothari has written an article (2014) titled *"India's connect Central Asia policy emerging economic and security dimensions"* which focuses on the importance of connection the central Asia policy in India in the central Asia in India in the central Asia region. SCO and China as a factor and what are the strategic scenario and India's response. Through the connect central Asia policy New Delhi aims to actively take part in central Asian regional cooperation and security arrangements. The oil and gas of this region generated new rivalry among external powers.

The article *"India's Soft Power in Central Asia: why it must act on the Look North Policy"* (2015) by Ramakrushna Pradhan highlights the present relations with central Asia. In 2015 the prime minister visits Asian countries and stay a day in all Central Asian republics the main aim was to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral engagement with these countries of the heartland region and will boost New Delhi's reengagement with central Asia. It is the revision or restart of India's look north policy which is under hibernation for decades.

Bawa Singh (2018) in his article *"India's Central Asia Policy: An overview of the challenges and options"* explains that the new great game had played a major role to metamorphose India's engagement with Central Asia. Realizing its omissions launched various official frameworks such as 'Extended neighborhood' Immediate and strategic neighborhood' and the 'look north policy' and the latest 'connect Central Asian' making its space in the region. To find out the geopolitical dynamics, challenges, and opportunities faced by Indian foreign policy. Both regions could not come closer to each other despite sharing close historical and cultural relations.

Meena Singh Roy is her article *"India connect Central Asia policy Building cooperative partnership"* (2013) analysis that central Asia has always drawn the attention of regional and extra regional powers because of its abundant rich natural resources, its geographical location as a land bridge between Asia and Europe and its ability to play a role on the world stage. The region has successfully expanded its influence in the global energy scene. Given the multi-dimensional geopolitical interest and positioning of the various powers in the post-soviet space, India's initiative in the central Asian region cannot be analyzed in isolation.

Suryakant Nijanand Bal in his book *"Central Asia : A strategy for Inidas look north policy (2004)"* gives a very timely, Exhaustive and masterly Analysis of the contemporary situation in the Central Asian republics in the context of India's security. Author combines his experience and expertise as a senior officer of Indian Air force with the Scholarly investigation and Rigour in presenting this incisive analysis of the possibilities and the potential that this region holds for India security.

## (4) RESEARCH GAP:-

Though a number of research work on India's policies towards central Asian Countries have already been done and some of them have tried to progress my research work but these works are not focused primarily on the question of external influence in CAR and its implication on India. The study on going new great game politics and its impact on India has been largely ignored. This study makes a very humble attempt to focus on India's economic and geopolitical interest in the context of the new great game politics in Central Asia.

## (5) OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: -

In order to conduct the study we have to set the following objectives as the prime theme of study:-

1. To study the Central Asia’s immense strategic significance to India.
2. To highlights India's economic interest in the Central Asian Region.

3. To study the reasons due to which India still lacks its influence in Central Asia.
4. To Analyze India's presence in the region with respect of external powers like China Russia & U.S.
5. To Evaluate the ongoing great game in the CAR in 21st Century.

## (6) HYPOSTHESIS :-

The study sets for forth the following hypothesis :-

1. India has not been able to take full advantage of its close linkages with Central Asia viz Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan.
2. The growing cooperation with CAR will benefit India in the field of security, economy & diplomacy.
3. The presence of key powers like USA, Russia, & China in this region affect India's national interest in a big way.
4. India's Geo Strategic Interest compels it to work for security and stability in the reason.
5. India is making a new equation with countries in central Asia in midst of the new great game.

## (7) RESEARCH METHODOLGY :-

Any particular contestation or research endeavour requires a specific methodology. This research will use qualitative and quantitative analysis, focusing more on qualitative expect such as analytical and historical method.

The method of data collection would include both primary and secondary sources. The primary source will consist of speeches, interviews, original research, photography, video etc. The secondary data source will cover government reports, the books, Journal articles, websites, magazine, newpaper etc.

The study is supplemented with maps and statistics to draw or extract appropriate assumption and make the study more presentable and appealing.

## (8) SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY :-

Now India is becoming a economic power in the Asia and can't afford to overlook central Asia (Resource Rich), if it has any ambition of remaining a raising power.

The analysis of how India will engage with CAR during the new great game politics and protects its economics and geopolitical interest.

The analysis is critical for India to understand the significance of CARs and the earlier measure taken to engage with the reason to gain influence in CARs and throughout Asia.

## (9) RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT DAY PROBLEM :-

1. The India- Central Asian cooperation can potentially and significantly boost India's Position in the global order.
2. Prime minister Narendra Modi's visit to five central Asian republics in 2015 indicates India's foreign policy shift towards the extended neighbourhood.
3. The research objective is to understand the regions strategic importance and the new great game played by the global power for their geopolitical and geo-economics interest.

## (10) CHAPTERISATION :-

I Will divide my research into five chapters as per the following :

**Chapter 1 :** History of Central Asian Countries and relation with India.

**Chapter 2 :** Geostrategic and economic interest of India in Central Asia.

**Chapter 3 :** Major challenges in India and Central Asian Countries.

**Chapter 4 :** The Emergence of New Great Game of 21$^{st}$ Century in Central Asia.

**Chapter 5 :** India's Policy framework to engage with Central Asian Region.

**Chapter 6:** Discussion and Conclusion

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